



"Education for Life"

Soledad Unified School District

Gene Martin, District Superintendent

335 Market Street • P.O. Box 186 • Soledad, CA 93960 • (831) 678-3987 • FAX (831) 678-2866

March 9, 2000

Mr. Joe C. Tacker, Foreman
1999 Monterey County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 414
Salinas, CA 93902

Dear Foreman Tacker:

Re: 1999 GRAND JURY RESPONSE

This is the Soledad Unified School District's response to the final report of the 1999 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Report. The four recommendations outlined in the report are as follows:

1. School Board members and Superintendents use STAR results to evaluate assignment of personnel;
2. Hiring practices ensure that certified certificated teachers are placed in the classroom while it is recognized that not every excellent teacher is fully certified. It is counterproductive to have a high percentage not fully certified;
3. School Board members search their collective conscious to determine if school funds should be better spent on students rather than on individuals performing what is a public service.
4. Each school district ensures that programs in place to help prevent school crime and vandalism are monitored. Those found guilty of crime be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Responses to the recommendations

1. We agree with the factual statement that test scores are low in Monterey County. Our district has 63% English Language Learners whose primary language is Spanish, yet were required to be tested in English. In spite of the English only SAT9 tests, we are making every effort to increase our test scores.

With respect to the recommendation that districts use standardized tests to rate and place teachers, while we may agree with that statement, we are unable to comply with the recommendation because California State Education Code 4462(e), prohibits districts from using publisher's norms established for standardized tests, in the evaluation and assessment of certificated employees.

Soledad High School
425 Gabilan Drive
Soledad, CA 93960
(831) 678-6400

Community Education Center
690 Main Street
Soledad, CA 93960
(831) 678-1279

Main Street Middle School
441 Main Street
Soledad, CA 93960
(831) 678-3923

Gabilan School
330 North Walker Dr.
Soledad, CA 93960
(831) 678-0604

San Vicente School
1300 Metz Road
Soledad, CA 93960
(831) 678-3914

2. We agree with the findings that there are not a sufficient number of certificated teachers in Monterey County, or for a fact in California

With respect to the recommendation, our district already makes every attempt to hire fully credentialed teachers by running ads in numerous newspapers, attending university job fairs, posting positions on the Internet, etc. When Class Size Reduction was implemented several years past, that created a teacher shortage in California. To overcome that shortage, the CSU and UC systems have implemented intern programs. All teachers in our district have, as a minimum, a Bachelor's Degree. Nearly all of our teachers who are not fully credentialed are in either an intern or pre-internship program.

3. We have no comment to the findings on compensation to certain school boards, as our district was not named.

We disagree with your recommendation, because State Education Code allows school boards to accept limited stipends. In our district school board members receive up to \$100.00 per month; however, none of the money is retained by any school board member. Instead, their entire stipend goes toward scholarships for high school graduates through a specific 501.3 (c) non-profit corporation.

4. We have no comment to the findings on costs and criminal acts on schools, as our district was not named.

We agree with the recommendation, as our district has a zero tolerance for any school violence. Our district already prosecutes guilty parties to the full extent of the law.

If you need any additional information, contact Gene Martin, District Superintendent at 678-3987.

Sincerely,


Albert O. Amaya, President of the Board


Gene Martin, District Superintendent